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ABSTRACT

This report is an evaluation of an interlibrary loan system that was put into operation for a 6-month experimental period beginning January 1, 1978, by the Cleveland Area Metropolitan Library System (CAMLS), a regional cooperative network of 19 public, academic, and special libraries in northern Ohio. The objective of the system was to increase efficiency by means of three major components: (1) the use of OCLC as the principal locator source with telefacsimile machines to relay requests directly from borrowing to lending library; (2) the use of a central resource library (Cleveland Public) to screen all requests for which OCLC did not provide a potential lending library; and (3) the use of referral circuit utilizing telefacsimile to route the remaining unfilled requests among member libraries. A statistical analysis of the ILL requests during the period indicated that over one-half of all the requests were handled directly between the borrowing and lending libraries; of the remaining requests, one-third were filled by the resource library; and less than one-third of all requests were placed on the circuit. The evaluation concluded that the experimental system was successful and should be continued. Other recommendations and the questionnaire used in the evaluation are included in the report. (Author)

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EVALUATION OF CAMLS EXPERIMENTAL ILL SYSTEM

A Report Prepared For
The Library Council of Greater Cleveland

By

The ILL Evaluation Task Force

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September 1978

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CAMLS

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Abstract

This report is an evaluation of an interlibrary loan system put into operation for a six-month experimental period beginning January 1, 1978 by CAMLS, the Cleveland Area Metropolitan Library System, a regional cooperative network of nineteen public, academic and special libraries in northern Ohio. The objective of the experimental system was to increase efficiency by means of three major components: 1) the use of OCLC as the principal locator source with telefacsimile machines to relay requests directly from borrowing to lending library; 2) the use of a central Resource Library (Cleveland Public) to screen all requests for which OCLC did not provide a potential lending library; 3) the use of a Referral Circuit, utilizing telefacsimile, to route the remaining unfilled requests among member libraries (arranged in order of their presumed ability to lend). A statistical analysis of the ILL requests during the experimental period indicated that: 1) over half of all requests were handled directly between the borrowing and lending libraries; 2) of the remaining requests, one third were filled by the Resource Library; 3) less than a third of all requests were placed on the circuit, 10% of which were filled by the first three nodes. The evaluation concluded that the experimental system was successful and should be continued. There are also other recommendations for improving CAMLS interlibrary loan activity.

CAMLS MEMBER LIBRARIES

BW	Baldwin Wallace College
CCC	Cuyahoga Community College
CCPL	Cuyahoga County Public Library
CHSL	Cleveland Health Sciences Library
CHUH	Cleveland Heights-University Heights Public Library
CPL	Cleveland Public Library
CSU	Cleveland State University
CWRU	Case Western Reserve University
DYKE	Dyke College
ECPL	East Cleveland Public Library
EPL	Euclid Public Library
JCU	John Carroll University
LPL	Lakewood Public Library
OB	Oberlin College
PPL	Porter Public Library
RRPL	Rocky River Public Library
STM	St. Mary Seminary
SHPL	Shaker Heights Public Library
WEPL	Willoughby-Eastlake Public Library

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EVALUATION OF CAMLS EXPERIMENTAL ILL SYSTEM

I. Introduction

After a series of productive meetings in the fall of 1977, the CAMLS Interlibrary Loan Advisory Committee recommended a reorganized plan of operations for the ILL network to the Interlibrary Loan Committee. The system which developed from this plan has become known simply as the "Experimental System". It was approved by the Committee at the December 15, 1977, meeting and put into operation by the Executive Director at the beginning of 1978.

At the time the plan for the Experimental System was being developed, it was evident to all that a formal evaluation would be essential. It was agreed that January through June 1978 should constitute a trial period testing the experimental modification of the existing procedures, with an evaluation to follow. At the May 25, 1978, meeting of the CAMLS Interlibrary Loan Advisory Committee, an Ill Evaluation Task Force was established. Henry York (CSU) agreed to chair the committee. The other members were: Helen Azusenis (CPL), Mary Freedman (RRPL), Mary Ellen Stasek (LPL), Mary K. Sweeny (JCU), and Stephen Wood (CHUH). This report is the product of that Task Force.

II. Historical Background

The handling of interlibrary loan requests has undergone many major and minor variations since the present CAMLS ILL Committee evolved from the former Cleveland Area Interlibrary Network (CAIN), which in turn had existed earlier in another form under the name Northeast Ohio Library Teletype Network (NOLTN). The system which the present experimental plan replaced was basically established in 1975 and 1976, featuring lists of requests relayed from library to library. The communication loops, that is, the sequence of libraries contacted on the network, were modified in late 1975 to create two loops, one for public libraries and one for academic libraries.

In February of 1976 the use of telefacsimile for transmission of requests was introduced. There were twenty-two nodes in the network including the CAMLS office. There was provision for switching some titles as deemed appropriate from one loop to the other by Cleveland Public Library, which acted as a switching center. From time to time the location of each library on the loops underwent various minor modifications in response to a wide variety of problems with equipment, personnel, etc.; however, the basic pattern of random searching among the nodes remained the essential feature of the previous system.

Although the establishment of the telefacsimile loops in February, 1976, was viewed as a great improvement over the previous use of telephone communications, with the total number of ILL loans in 1976 nearly doubling the 1975 figure, there was considerable informal feeling among the member interlibrary loan libraries that there must be a better way to handle the ILL requests. These observations were confirmed by Dr. Dorothy Sinclair's report Analysis of Interlibrary Loans Among Libraries of the Cleveland Area Metropolitan Library System, 1977. Dr. Sinclair, who was then the Executive Secretary of CAMLS, analyzed the existing ILL operations and presented a series of recommendations. These recommendations served as a basis for the reorganized plan of operations developed by the CAMLS Interlibrary Loan Advisory Committee for 1978. Of particular importance in formulating these new procedures was Dr. Sinclair's recommendation that non-journal citations to items published 1973+ should be checked on OCLC before being placed on the loops. Direct requests to the holding libraries were to be utilized whenever possible, decreasing loop requests. The report also noted that the past practice of avoiding heavy use of any one library would need reconsideration in the future.

At the LCGC meeting of October 4, 1977, Dr. Gaines offered to have CPL receive

and check all requests first before sending the remaining unfilled on to the other libraries. This proposal offered another important stimulus for developing the Experimental System.

III. Characteristics and Objectives of the Experimental System

The Experimental System introduced in January, 1978 has three major components: 1) direct requests using the 3M telefacsimile machines or the telephone for items located on OCLC, 2) the use of a Central Resource Library which would hopefully provide many of the requested items, and 3) a Referral Circuit, operated by the 3M machines, to route the residue of unfilled requests among the remaining member libraries. The systematic use of OCLC as a locator and the use of a central resource library were fundamental changes from the previous pattern of interlibrary loan activity.

The anticipated results of these changes were increased efficiency and speed in ILL operation resulting in faster services to ILL patrons. It was anticipated that by using OCLC as a locator device, there would be an increase in direct loans which would mean a corresponding decrease in circuit or loop requests. This would mean that for these requests the practice of multiple searches by a number of libraries until a location was found would be eliminated, reducing duplicate efforts and wasted time. The use of a Central Resource Library was instituted with the expectation that CPL could fill a significant percent of the CAMLS requests, thus eliminating them from the pool of requests with which the other libraries needed to deal. The libraries were arranged on the Referral Circuit in order of their presumed ability to lend, another innovation designed to avoid fruitless searching and wasted time. The former pattern of proceeding randomly from node to node in search of a "hit" has been replaced by a system specifically designed to locate the "hit" with maximum efficiency by a process of elimination. First, all one-

on-one situations are removed from the pool of total requests with direct transactions arranged between the borrowing and lending libraries; second, the remaining pool of unanswered requests are sent to CPL, the Central Resource Library, the library assumed to be able to fill the largest number of requests;[1] and third, the subsequent residue of unfilled requests are sent to the remaining libraries in order, according to their presumed ability to lend, with the strongest lender first, to again maximize the potential for a "hit".

IV. Questionnaire

Questionnaires (sample attached) were sent to all ILL Advisory Committee representatives and operators to gather information and statistics on response to the experimental system. Thirty-four out of the total of forty (85%) questionnaires were returned. Generally responses showed that even though the Experimental System requires more staff time, CAMLS libraries approve of the Experimental System and are pleased with its efficiency.

The statistics show that libraries are receiving direct requests on the average of 2.5 days after placing them. On an average two libraries are contacted before the request is located. The longest time given was "one to two weeks" and the shortest was one day. When the responses were analyzed by types of libraries (public/academic, large/small, east/west side) no significant patterns were found except in the responses to question nine dealing with circuit requests. Academic libraries state that they do not use or make very little use of the circuit. The reason cited most often was the time factor involved with placing circuit request and receiving responses. For public libraries the average time to receive a book that has been placed on the circuit is four days.

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[1] This assumption is based on prior ILL studies and Holdings in Selected Cleveland Area Libraries of Titles Listed in CHOICE April, 1975; April, 1976. CAMLS Occasional publication Number Four.

In looking at the Experimental System as a whole, there were almost as many advantages and disadvantages cited as there were questionnaires returned. The disadvantage cited most frequently was the amount of staff time required. The major advantage cited was that books and/or responses were received more quickly. Other advantages mentioned were the shorter, alphabetized circuit list that is only transmitted once and the increased cooperation between academic and public libraries. Other disadvantages included the exclusion of unverified requests from the circuits and the lack of the complete inclusion of CPL's holdings on OCLC.

The representatives and operators responding to the questionnaire are unanimously in favor of continuing with the Experimental System. All libraries support the concepts of a Central Resource Library and the use of OCLC as a locator for direct requests. Notwithstanding the additional time required by this system, all libraries indicated their preference to continue with it due to the increased speed in receiving materials.

V. Statistics of the Experimental System (January-June 1978):

A. Flow of Requests Through the System:

Total Number of Requests: 7,312

1.	Number of Direct Requests:	3,864	52.8% of total
2.	Number of Requests Sent to Resource Library:	3,448	47.4% of total
3.	Number of Requests Filled or Eliminated[2] by CPL as Resource Library:	1,143	32.9% of received at Resource Library, or 15.8% of total
4.	Number of Requests Placed on Circuit	2,325	31.8% of total
5.	Number of Circuit Requests Filled by First Three Nodes	232[3]	10% of circuit requests, or 3% of total

[2]CPL eliminated from the circuit 181 unverified requests.

[3]This figure is an estimate based on a tabulation for a two month period.

These statistics show that over half of the requests are handled directly between the borrowing and lending library. Of the remaining requests, one-third are filled by one library, CPL, the Central Resource Library. Less than one-third of all requests are placed on the circuit. Of these, 33% are filled by the first three sites on the circuit.

B. Total Items Ranked by Number Lent:

	June-Dec 1977		June-Dec 1978	
1.	CPL	1037	CPL	1013
2.	CW	775	CNU	733
3.	CNU	754	CY	344
4.	CNO	385	CNO	317
5.	CY	344	CW	293
6.	EP	249	LP	288
7.	LP	230	CB	184
8.	CB	183	CO	99
9.	CO	138	CH	90
10.	CH	134	JCU	80
11.	JCU	110	EP	74
12.	OC	42	OC	38
13.	OB	41	OW	34
14.	OW	38	OE	10
15.	OY	42	OY	8
16.	OE	41	OB	4
17.	CCC	11	CCC	3
TOTAL		4,813		4,738

These statistics make very evident the role CPL is playing in siphoning off at the beginning many requests that would otherwise eventually be answered by other libraries. The loans of the smaller libraries have had a corresponding reduction.

C. Time on Circuit:*

	No. Days on Circuit	No. Days Not Busy
Jan.	5.10	5.34
Feb.	6.67	5.71
Mar.	5.77	5.36
Apr.	5.63	5.81
May	5.38	6.00**
June	5.81	5.48
Average	5.55	5.10

* Does not include 1 day at Resource Library

** No clock in 1982.6 with 41 reported replies as completed by Executive Director

No. times that cases through circuit in 2 days or less

January	1
February	1
March	2
April	2
May	1
June	11

These statistics indicate the considerable progress made in shortening the time on the circuit. The one day delay at the Resource Library has now been eliminated.

D. Fill Rates:

During 1977 using the previous system the fill rate was 77%. During the first six months of 1978 using the Departmental System the fill rate was 65%, a decrease of 12%. Some possible explanations for the decline include: 1) the increase in the total number of requests, 2) the probable tendency to drop dissent requests after several unsuccessful attempts, 3) the elimination by OPS of "Can Not Verify" requests from the circuit, and 4) a change in the types of requests. A study of unfilled requests is presently being conducted which may provide further explanation.

VII. Observations and Recommendations

When examining the available evidence, including the descriptive, the questionnaires, and personal observations, the Task Force has reached these observations and recommendations:

1. The use of MISC as a locator device has proven useful and should be continued. As the holdings of the SWRLC libraries become increasingly available on MISC, the number of direct requests will increase and the number of circuit requests will drop correspondingly. This trend should be encouraged. The greatest single step to improve SWRLC ILL activity would be the inclusion of all members' serial collections on MISC.
2. The concept of a resource library has proven its worth in this system and should be continued. 38% of the circuit requests were loaned by the non-core libraries during the experimental period. To date, UNL has not found this perform a burden.
3. The responses to the open ended questions indicate the general impression that the experimental system is more time than the previous system. The time cost, however, is spent by the borrowing libraries mainly in placing direct requests. Alternately, time was spent by the potential lending libraries, mainly in checking circuit request files. The Task Force believes that this places the burden of inconvenience (ILL activity above) on people unfamiliar to ILL.
4. The smaller libraries under the Dana-X pilot system are not seeing the number of books that did previously. The three smallest libraries sent 33 books during January-June 1978, as compared to 140 in the first six months of 1977. The Task Force concluded that the effectiveness of the network as a whole outweighed an improvement the desires of the smaller libraries to lend more. Participation in SWRLC and

interlibrary cooperation may take different forms in different libraries. These statistics do not necessarily reflect the inability of small libraries to lend, but rather the system's turning to the larger libraries first for greater efficiency.

5. The decline in the fill rate is modest (6%) but disturbing. The ILL Advisory Committee should continue to monitor the system.
6. The Task Force recommends that CPL undertake the responsibility of handling the verification of problem requests for a trial period. Specific guidelines would be prepared by CPL.
7. The Task Force recommends that the Council authorize the ILL Advisory Committee to investigate the establishment of a permanent ILL clearing-house. Such a center could more effectively perform many of the functions now performed by the individual libraries and provide other services not now available. The center could handle verification, look up OCLC locations, route requests, provide access to other networks, compile statistics, etc.
8. The Task Force recommends that lists of ILL unlocated requests should be made available to the CAMLS Resource Committee for consideration for purchase.
9. The Task Force recommends that the desirability and feasibility of establishing a CAMLS interface with other ILL networks such as TWXIL (State Library) and NEOMAL be studied.

VII. Conclusion

The Experimental System is providing ILL material faster using a more efficient process than the previous system. The Task Force believes that these accomplishments outweigh any drawbacks and unanimously recommends its continuance. This recommendation is in accordance with the opinions

expressed by the ILL librarians and operators of the CAMLS libraries. The Task Force also believes that the implementation of the recommendations in this report would markedly improve the ILL process.

M E M O R A N D U M

June 15, 1978

To: CAMLS ILL Representatives and Operators

From: CAMLS ILL Evaluation Task Force

Subject: Evaluation of Experimental ILL System

In order to properly assess the CAMLS ILL Experimental System which went into effect January 3, 1978, this Task Force has begun a detailed study and evaluation. One of the steps in this procedure involves the use of questionnaires in order to obtain the widest possible input of ideas and opinions. Copies of the questionnaire are being sent to each CAMLS representative and operator. We would like each person to answer the questions independently. We realize that in many cases the information you supply will have to be estimates based on experience. Obviously, the more accurate the information, the more useful it will be. Your replies will be confidential.

We hope to have the final report written by September fifteenth. This means we must have your replies by August first. Please add any comments you feel would be useful to the Task Force to the end of the questionnaire.

Please return your questionnaire in the enclosed envelope.

Questionnaire
on
CAMLS Experimental ILL System

*1. How much time is spent on an average day on direct requests in borrowing material?

a) professionals_____ c) clericals_____
b) paraprofessionals_____ d) students_____

*2. How much time is spent on an average day on direct requests in lending material?

a) professionals_____ c) clericals_____
b) paraprofessionals_____ d) students_____

*3. How much time is spent on an average day on circuit requests in borrowing material?

a) professionals_____ c) clericals_____
b) paraprofessionals_____ d) students_____

*4. How much time is spent on an average day on circuit requests in lending material?

a) professional_____ c) clericals_____
b) paraprofessionals_____ d) students_____

5. How does the amount of time spent in borrowing under the experimental system compare with the time required under the previous system?

6. How does the amount of time spent in lending under the experimental system compare with the time required under the previous system?

7. On the average how long does it take for your direct requests from the time you place them until received?

8. On the average how many libraries do you contact

a) before a direct request is filled?_____
b) before a direct request is placed on the circuit, or dropped?_____

9. On the average how long does it take for your circuit requests from the time you place them until received?

10. Do you consider the concept of using a central resource library in this network valid from the standpoint of a borrowing library? Why?

* Please supply information for all categories to the best of your ability.

11. Do you consider the concept of using a central resource library in this network valid from the standpoint of a lending library? Why?

12. As a borrowing library do you support the concept of direct requests for material located at CAMLS libraries using OCLC? Why?

13. As a lending library do you support the concept of direct requests for material located at CAMLS libraries using OCLC? Why?

14. What are the major advantages you see in the experimental system?

15. What are the major disadvantages you see in the experimental system?

16. What changes would you recommend in the experimental system?

17. Are you in favor of continuing with the present system beyond the end of the evaluation period?

Name _____ Library _____

Position _____